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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(RELEASE ON RECEIPT)

SUBJECT: "Aphids"...Information from the gardening specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture.

And now...in my best Southern drawl...I have a riddle. What insect is the ant's favorite? Well...of course...ants like aphids. Because they, (and I don't mean our mothers' or fathers' sisters) get a fluid substance from aphids and use it as a food.

As far as we human beings are concerned, the aphid's a pest. Garden specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture warn gardeners to watch for them and be ready. They don't chew up plants, they suck the sap. This sucking causes leaves to curl and it weakens and gradually kills the young shoots.

In case you don't recognize aphids..or plant lice...when you see them, here's what you want to look for. Small soft bodied insects. Usually green, but sometimes pinkish, brown or black. When you see one, it most likely won't be by itself. Aphids attack in hords. They collect on ends of shoots and you may find them also on the underside of leaves.

Because aphid infestations build up rapidly, you want to start to work the minute you find them in your garden. Prevention's the cure. If you can keep killing off aphids as they appear, chances are you won't have to struggle against overwhelming numbers of them.

Treatments have to be applied so they touch the bodies of the plant lice directly. Mere dustings with the usual insect poisons don't stop them because they get their food from inside the leaves. Nicotine dust will kill aphids. And so will nictine sulfate used as a spray. A strong soap solution...about one pound of soap to five gallons of water will do the job too.

If you want more information about how to prepare these mixtures, ask your local victory garden leader or your county agricultural agent. They'll be glad to help.

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